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or collection of books, conceded to be otherwise so full of errors ; and many rationalistic minds will put it on one side as entirely presumptuous in the face of that admission. But it is quite possible to conceive of divine truth being conveyed to man through very imperfect media. It no doubt sorely tries the confidence of many in the Bible to find even the scholarship of the church rejecting it as an infallible authority on every subject on which it treats but one ; but if we *must* prune away old beliefs it does not follow that we must cut down to the roots, and even tear up and destroy that which is *essential* and *vital* to belief.

This is evidently our author's view, and he seriously and skillfully sets himself the task of distinguishing between the essential purpose and authority of Scripture and the perverted ideas of men and theologians in regard thereto.

## VI.

### A HALF CENTURY OF SONG.\*

WE have spent a delightful hour wandering discursively through the four attractive volumes of poetical selections which Mr. Henry F. Randolph has, with much industry and excellent taste, contributed to the literature of the current season. Mr. Randolph has made a very careful survey of the field, and few, if any, exceptions can be taken to either the names, the selections or the mode of classification. None but English poets are represented, and those only who have during the reign of Queen Victoria produced work worthy of their reputation, or have been poet laureates. The selections are sufficiently ample to convey a very fair idea of the peculiarities of each poet.

One cannot fail to be struck with the extent and variety of poetic talent under review. Rich, indeed, has the Victorian era been in works of genius. If no one name stands out with the pre-eminence of a Shakespeare or a Milton, there are scores of gifted men and women whose writings possess a wondrous charm, and the thought of grouping men together according to their poetic affinities and culling from each the choicest specimens of their life work is a peculiarly happy one.

A few names we miss which might perhaps be naturally expected to be found. George Eliot one would think entitled to a niche, and also the two Montgomerys. Certainly the author of the hymn beginning :

Prayer is the soul's sincere desire,

ought not to be passed over in any enumeration of modern hymn-writers or distinctively religious poets of the past fifty years

A capital feature of this work is the care bestowed upon the text, the selections being from the standard editions, and great attention having been given to the preservation of the original punctuation and orthography. Brief notes, biographical and bibliographical, precede the text in each volume, and at the end of each are full indexes, a list of the authors, and some useful and interesting explanatory notes.

## VII.

### A STORY WITH TWO AUTHORS.

THE plot of "The Second Son"† turns upon the weakness of an English squire, who petulantly disinherits the oldest of his three sons on the ground of a romantic love affair, and entails his landed estates upon his youngest son, because

\* "Fifty Years of English Song." Selections from the Poets of the Reign of Victoria. Edited and arranged by Henry F. Randolph. A. D. F. Randolph & Co.

† "The Second Son." A novel. By M. O. W. Oliphant and T. B. Aldrich. Houghton, Mifflin & Co.